

Message Text

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TAGS: ELTN, ECON, UR

SUBJECT: SOVIET SIBERIAN TRANSPORTATION POLICY

REF: MOSCOW 5630 (4/17/74) (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: FRAGMENTS OF INFORMATION FROM VARIOUS SOURCES BEGIN TO REVEAL MASSIVE LONG-TERM TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR SIBERIA. BASIC SCHEME APPEARS TO BE ESTABLISHMENT OF EXTENSIVE, RELIABLE, AND DIVERSE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK AS FOUNDATION FOR RAPID SIBERIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. THIS GOAL PRESUPPOSES ACHIEVEMENT OF GREATER BALANCE AMONG VARIOUS FORMS OF TRANSPORTATION IN AREA AND REDUCTION OF LONG-STANDING DISPROPORTION FAVORING AIR AND RIVER TRANSPORT IN NORTH AND EAST SIBERIA. ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS IN SOVIETS' SIBERIAN TRANSPORTATION POLICY SEEM TO INCLUDE:

-- SECOND TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILROAD ACROSS ENTIRE BREADTH OF SIBERIA NORTH OF EXISTING TRANS-SIB (EVENTUALLY ENCOMPASSING BAM PROJECT, WHICH WILL SIMPLY BECOME SEGMENT OF LONGER LINE);

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-- HARD-SURFACED TRANS-SIBERIAN HIGHWAY, LINKING CHELYABINSK WITH

CHITA AND EVENTUALLY VLADIVOSTOK;
-- NEWWORK OF FEEDER ROAD AND RAIL LINES EXTENDING GENERALLY
NORTHWARD FROM THESE NEW ARTERIES;
-- INTENSIFIED DEVELOPMENT OF RIVER FLEET ON MAIN SIBERIAN RIVERS
AND CREATION OF DEEP WATER PORTS AT OUTLETS OF SIBERIAN RIVERS SO
THAT RIVER SHIPPING CAN INTERFACE WITH SOVIET OCEAN-GOING MERCHANT
FLEET;
-- EXTENSION OF AIR NETWORK AND DEVELOPMENT OF AIRCRAFT SPECIALLY
DESIGNED FOR SIBERIAN CONDITIONS.

END SUMMARY

2. SECOND TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILROAD. SINCE BREZHNEV'S MARCH 1974
ALMA-ATA SPEECH ANNOUNCING BAIKAL-AMUR MAGISTRAL' (BAM) PROJECT,
INTENSE WESTERN INTEREST AND DOMESTIC SOVIET PRESS COVERAGE HAS
FOCUSED ON THIS "PROJECT OF THE CENTURY." ACTUALLY, SOVIETS HAVE
MUCH LARGER RAILROAD CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM IN MIND. REFTEL
REPORTED RUMOR FROM ROMANIAN SOURCE THAT SOVIETS PLANNED NEW
RAIL LINE ACROSS ALL OF SIBERIA, FROM TYUMEN' IN WEST TO SOVYET-
SKAYA GAVAN' IN EAST. THIS RUMOR CONFIRMED BY LENGTHY ARTICLE IN
JANUARY 1975 NOVYY MIR ENTITLED "GRAND SKETCH OF SIBERIA," BY ONE
LEONID SHINKAREV. AMONG OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST, ARTICLE STATES
THAT "LOGICALLY" BAM WILL BE EXTENDED FROM UST'-KUT THROUGH
BOGUCHANY AND ABALAKOVO TO CONNECT WITH RAILROADS OF THE OIL AND
GAS REGIONS OF WESTERN SIBERIA INTO ONE "NORTH SIBERIAN MAINLINE."
REFERENCE TO WEST SIBERIAN RAILROADS ALMOST CERTAINLY MEANS
EXISTING TYUMEN'-TOBOLSK LINE, EXTENSION OF WHICH TO SURGUT AND
NIZHNE-VARTOVSK RAPIDLY APPROACHING COMPLETION. PRESUMABLY, THEN,
ULTIMATE ROUTE OF SECOND TRANS-SIB (OR NORTH SIBERIAN MAINLINE)
WILL BE: TYUMEN'-TOBOLSK-NIZHNE-VARTOVSK-ABALAKOVO-UST'-KUT-
TYNDA-SOVYETSKAYA GAVAN'. THROUGH WESTERN AND CENTRAL SIBERIA
THIS LINE WILL PASS SEVERAL HUNDRED KILOMETERS NORTH OF EXISTING

TRANS-SIBERIAN LINE. AT ABALAKOVO IT WILL TRANSECT EXISTING
TRANS-SIB SPUR LINE FROM ACHINSK TO MAKLAKOVO.

3. ALL-WEATHER TRANS-SIBERIAN HIGHWAY. ALTHOUGH CONTINUING
SOVIET HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION IN SIBERIA HAS BEEN NO SECRET,
IZVESTIYA ARTICLE MAY 12 IS FIRST REFERENCE EMBASSY HAS SEEN TO
SPECIFIC TRANS-SIBERIA ROAD PROJECT. IN ARTICLE, RSFSR DEPUTY
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MINISTER OF HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION AND UTILIZATION G.N, BORODIN
REFERES TO PROJECT AS "AUTO-BAM" AND STATES THAT TRANS-SIBERIAN
HIGHWAY WILL BE NO LESS IMPORTANT TO ECONOMY OF EASTERN REGIONS OF
COUNTRY THAN WILL BAM. EXTENDING FROM CHELYABINSK TO CHITA (OVER
FIVE THOUSAND KILOMETERS) ROAD WILL ROUGHLY PARALLEL ROUTE OF
TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILROAD, PASSING THROUGH ALL OBLAST, AND RAYON
CENTERS ALONG THE WAY. ACCORDING TO BORODIN, MORE THAN 2300
KILOMETERS OF ASPHALT-SURFACED ROAD HAS BEEN LAID ON THE PROJECT

--WHICH WAS BEGUN IN 1962--WITH ANOTHER 309 KILOMETERS SCHEDULED FOR COMPLETION THIS YEAR. ROAD WILL EVENTUALLY BE CONTINUED ON TO VLADIVOSTOK; IN THAT CONNECTION ENGINEERING WORK NOW PROCEEDING IN AREAS EAST FROM CHITA AND WEST FROM Khabarovsk TOWARD Blagoveshchensk.

4. NETWORK OF FEEDER ROAD AND RAIL LINES. BOTH THE SHINKAREV AND BORODIN ARTICLES INDICATE THAT CREATION OF THESE NEW RAIL AND ROAD ARTERIES WILL BE ACCOMPANIED (AND FOLLOWED) BY CONSTRUCTION OF BROAD NETWORK OF FEEDER LINES. REGARDING EXTENSION OF ROAD NETWORK, BORODIN NOTES ONLY THAT BRANCH HIGHWAYS LEADING OUT FROM IT WILL TOTAL GREATER LENGTH THAN THAT OF TRANS-SIBERIAN HIGHWAY ITSELF. CONCERNING RAILROAD, SOME OF FEEDER LINES ARE ALREADY FINISHED (E.G., ACHINSKI-MAKLOKOVO, TAYGA-TOMSK-ASINO, BAM-TYNDA). MOST IMPORTANT NEW FEEDER LINE WILL BE TYNDA-BERKAKTI (CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION AND SCHEDULED FOR COMPLETION IN 1978). THIS LINE--ACCORDING TO SHINKAREV--WILL EVENTUALLY EXTEND TO ALDAN, TOMMOT, AND YAKUTSK, AFTER WHICH IT WILL TAKE "SHARP TURN TO THE RIGHT" AND PROCEED TO MAGADAN (FOLLOWING BASINS OF YANA, INDIGIRKA, AND KOLYMA RIVERS). THIS WILL BE KNOWN AS "NORTHEAST MAINLINE."

5. RIVER FLEETS. INDICATIONS ARE THAT SIBERIAN RIVER FLEETS--LONG THE BACKBONE OF SIBERIAN SURFACE TRANSPORTATION NORTH OF TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILROAD--WILL RECEIVE FURTHER INTENSIVE DEVELOPMENT AND MODERNIZATION. SOVIETS, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE REPORTEDLY PLACING ORDER IN FINLAND FOR NEW SHIPS FOR RIVER FLEET. IN SOVIET FAR NORTH, EVEN WITH GRADUOSE ROAD- AND RAIL-BUILDING PROGRAM DESCRIBED ABOVE RIVERS WILL FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE REMAIN SINGLE MEANS OF SURFACE TRANSPORTATION. IN THIS CONNECTION, SOVIETS APPEAR TO BE PLANNING DEVELOPMENT OF DEEP WATER PORTS WHERE SEVERAL SIBERIAN RIVERS (PARTICULARLY YENISEY, LENA, INDIGIRKA, AND KOLYMA) EMPTY INTO ONE OR ANOTHER OF ARCTIC SEAS.

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SOVIETS ARE KNOWN TO HAVE PLACED ORDERS IN THE NETHERLANDS FOR FLOATING DREDGES FOR USE, ACCORDING TO ONE OFFICIAL OF RSFSR MINISTRY OF RIVER FLEET, IN CLEARING MOUTHS OF SIBERIAN RIVERS.

6. EXTENSION OF AIR NETWORK. AIR TRANSPORTATION WILL NOT BE NEGLECTED IN SOVIET PLANS FOR SIBERIAN DEVELOPMENT. MOST PARTS OF SIBERIA WILL REMAIN INACCESSIBLE EXCEPT BY AIR. SOVIET PLANS FOR EXPLOITING PROVEN BUT PRESENTLY INACCESSIBLE MINERAL RESOURCES, PARTICULARLY GOLD AND OTHER PRECIOUS METALS, REQUIRES NEW AIRFIELDS AND AIRCRAFT (FREIGHT, PASSENGER, AND INCLUDING HELICOPTERS). ONE EXAMPLE IS YAK-42, WHICH IS BEING DEVELOPED VERY RAPIDLY FOR COMMERCIAL USE AND HAS ALREADY BEEN FLIGHT TESTED. DESIGNED FOR SHORT TAKEOFFS AND LANDINGS FROM NON-PAVED LANDING STRIPS LIKE ITS PREDECESSOR THE YAK-40, YAK-42 HAS CONSIDERABLY LARGER PASSENGER AND FREIGHT CAPACITY AND APPEARS SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED FOR USE IN

ARTIC CONDITIONS.

7. COMMENT: GOSPLAN CHAIRMAN BAYBAKOV TOLD AMBASSADOR IN JULY 1974 THAT TRANSPORTATION IS HIS BIGGEST PROBLEM. COORDINATING PLANS FOR SUCH DIVERSE AND EXTENSIVE DEVELOPMENT AS THAT ENVISAGED FOR SIBERIA MUST INDEED CAUSE MANY HEADACHES. WHILE NOT DISPUTING THAT CHOICE OF BAM PROJECT AS INITIAL ELEMENT IN SECOND TRANS-SIB WAS INFLUENCED BY STRATEGIC REASON (VIS-A-VIS THE CHINESE). IT BECOMES APPARENT WHEN VIEWING OVERALL SOVIET SIBERIAN POLICY THAT EXTENSIVE AND DIVERSIFIED TRANSPORTATION NETWORK IS (CORRECTLY) SEEN AS NECESSARY BASE FOR MEANINGFUL DEVELOPMENT OF MANUFACTURING AND RAW MATERIALS EXTRACTION INDUSTRIES. TRANS-SIBERIAN HIGHWAY, FOR EXAMPLE, AS DEPUTY MINISTER BORODIN POINTS OUT WILL BE OF TREMENDOUS VALUE IN REMOVING BURDEN FROM RAILROAD FOR "LOCAL" FREIGHT HAULAGE BETWEEN SIBERIAN CITIES. SURELY NOT LEAST AMONG BENEFITS TO USSR ECONOMY WILL BE ACCESS TO WORLD TRADE ROUTES THIS TRANSPORTATION NETWORK WILL PROVIDE FOR SIBERIA. THIS ASPECT IS OF PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE WITH REGARD TO COMPENSATION PROJECTS TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN COOPERATION WITH FOREIGN FIRMS, MOST OF THEM TO BE LOCATED IN SIBERIA. STOESSEL

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